

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: ಇತ್ತೀಚಿನ Finance

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 7/2/2021

LI . KOLKATA . HUBBALLI . MOHALI . MALAPPURAM . MUMBAI . TIRUPATI . LUCKNOW . CUTTACK . PATNA

NITI Aayog seeks to track impact of green verdicts

Govt. think tank for an 'economically responsible approach'

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The NITI Aayog – the government's apex think tank – has commissioned a study that seeks to examine the “unintended economic consequences” of judicial decisions that have hindered and stalled big-ticket projects on environmental grounds.

SPECIAL

A perusal of the document appears to suggest that judgments that negatively impact major infrastructure projects don't adequately consider the economic fallout – in terms of loss of jobs and revenue. Doing so, it reckons, would contribute to public discourse among policymakers for promoting an “economically responsible approach by judiciary” in its decisions.

The project brief, a copy of which has been viewed by *The Hindu*, says that it in-

Obstacle course

Some projects/companies which have hit the hurdle

MOPA AIRPORT, GOA
The SC in 2019 suspended environmental clearance but lifted it in Jan. 2020 after imposing several conditions



STERLITE COPPER, THOOTHUKUDI, T.N.
The SC in Dec. rejected a proposal made by Vedanta to operate its closed copper plant. The Madras HC and the T.N. govt. had ordered the closure of the plant



IRON ORE MINING, GOA
In 2018, the SC quashed 88 mining leases for violation of mining procedures and asked the State govt. to issue fresh leases



SAND MINING, UTTAR PRADESH
The National Green Tribunal in 2013 suspended sand mining operations and directed that environmental clearances be obtained from authorities



CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN & AROUND DELHI
The NGT imposed a ban on construction activities but specific instances are not known



tends to examine five major projects that have been “impacted” by judicial decisions of the Supreme Court or the National Green Tribunal.

It plans to do this by interviewing people who have

been affected by the closure of the projects, environmental campaigners, experts and assessing the business impact of closure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

NITI Aayog seeks to track impact of green verdicts

Projects to be analysed include the construction of an airport in Mopa, Goa; cessation of iron ore mining in Goa, and the shutting down of the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu.

The others are decisions by the NGT involving sand mining, and construction activities in the National Capital Region.

"These have been some of the most significant cases in the recent past that have caused substantial damage to the economy," the brief notes. The study is to be undertaken by the Jaipur-headquartered CUTS (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation, that also has an international presence.

"The judiciary needs to take into account environment, equity and economic considerations while deciding cases, and needs to institutionalise a mechanism for it," the brief notes.

"The absence of ex-ante (before an event) analysis of the economic costs associated with a decision is further exacerbated when judicial activism by courts and tri-

bunals is also in play."

Vikrant Tongad, Uttar Pradesh-based environmentalist and founder, Social Action for Forest and Environment (SAFE) was among those whom CUTS reached out to, as an expert, because of his involvement in campaigns against sandmining operations. He told *The Hindu* that he found the study "surprising" in its intent. "Does the government now want to train judges not to give such judgements? Is the government forgetting that due to their negligence, courts have been forced to give strict orders. Will the NITI Aayog also study how much damage will be done if the courts do not give such orders," he asked.

Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar said the study was a purely economic exercise.

"The intent of this study is to analyse the cost and benefit of certain judicial decisions. It doesn't question judicial intervention. I was, for example, happy to see how Supreme Court's intervention led to the adoption of CNG (compressed natural gas, in transport vehicles in Delhi) and the economic benefits from it."